



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF GREATER LOWELL

Equity Action Plan - April 2022 Update

“Inclusion is not bringing people into what already exists; It is making a new space,
a better space for everyone.”

— George Jerry Sefa Dei



Core Principles that are universal to this plan:

Centering youth voice: Ensure that youth priorities guide all staff implementation and all supporter investment.

Co-creating a safe and brave space: Encourage dialogue among youth, staff, and community that ensures learning and respect, recognizing that it may also cause discomfort.

Using our privilege, individually and organizationally: Understand how our identity may contribute to injustice, and use the power of our identity to work toward justice.



This plan was divided into 8 pillars of action, each with its own set of goals and strategies to achieve those goals. Those goals and strategies are shared on the following pages.

- 1) **Youth Support:** We honor our Club members' lived experience to ensure they are provided opportunities to share their experiences through various platforms. We will ensure that they have access to support from caring adults at the Club and through community resources.
- 2) **Youth Voice:** We create space for our teens, especially those from marginalized communities, to build both skills and confidence in order to amplify their voices. We increase their access to tools to effect systemic change, and we use our organizational access to connect members with representatives, attend community rallies, and strive for change.
- 3) **Brave Space:** We create an environment of inclusion, acceptance, kindness for our members, volunteers, staff and stakeholders. We ensure a space that has no room for racism or discrimination of any kind.
- 4) **Communications:** We seek out and share resources for dialogue on race, supporting trauma-informed mental health, and positive allyship. We use our platforms to amplify the voices of marginalized community members.

5) Human Resources: We examine our hiring practices, professional development, compensation, and promotion practices to minimize opportunities for bias to affect outcomes. We recruit team members who are representative of our community at all levels of the organization. We conduct more outreach to communities of color and make job opportunities more accessible to all. We ensure that our team has the proper cultural competency and anti-racism training.

6) Volunteers: We expand and ensure the diversity of volunteers on our boards, our committees, in program areas, and on our parent council. We prioritize volunteers who have similar backgrounds and experiences to the youth who we serve and refine our outreach practices to reach them.

7) Social Connections: We intentionally connect people of color / marginalized identities to power structures where we have influence (including fundraising events, committees, and task forces) to support power-building across the community.

8) Fundraising: We ensure that fundraising practices are fair and equitable, and we recognize our donors, staff, volunteers, and families as partners in our vision to end generational poverty.



*"There is always light, if only we are brave enough to see it - if only we are
brave enough to be it."*

- Amanda Gorman

Equity Action Plan Pillar #1

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GOAL: Become a trauma-informed organization that takes into consideration the impact of trauma on behavior and youth development, especially as it relates to discipline, outreach, and referrals.

STRATEGY: Create a road map for becoming a trauma-informed organization

ACTION STEP: The Club has worked closely with Boys & Girls Clubs of America to create a template to become a Trauma Informed Organization. Additionally, there has been ongoing staff training to support this goal. These trainings include: Trauma-Informed Introduction, Emotional Agility, Growing Our Strengths, and Understanding Epigenetics.



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GOAL: Provide opportunities for Club members to learn coping skills and 21st-century life skills that support outcomes toward breaking the cycle of generational poverty.

STRATEGY: Work with external facilitators who bring relevant professional and lived experience

ACTION STEP: Throughout 2021, the Club's Volunteer Coordinator worked with a group of medical professionals from Lowell General Hospital, all who identify as people of color, to develop a formal mentoring program for Club teens. To date, 6 teens have been matched to community mentors, and there are plans to extend this program in the coming months. Additionally, the Teen Pathways and Academic Success Departments have worked closely with external volunteers, organizations, and companies, to provide representative role models and opportunities for members to learn about varying career paths, college & post-high school readiness, and financial literacy.

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Members participate in Jeanne D'Arc Credit Union's "Grow Your Money" workshop, an interactive exercise that demonstrated how compound interest can help money to grow when "planted" in a savings account.



UML's National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) facilitates a bridge-building activity with members following a presentation about the Engineering field and the steps it takes to become a successful Engineer.



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We will ensure that they have access to support from caring adults at the Club and through community resources.

GOAL: Ensure that all Club members feel represented, respected, and heard by peers, Staff, and volunteers when engaging in programs, embodying the Club Love intention.

STRATEGY: Incorporate specific ways to build diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging into ongoing programs

ACTION STEP: On May 20, 2021, members of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell participated in the "Represent Yourself" Cultural Fashion Show, featuring performances from the Music Clubhouse, a dance routine by the Blue Heat Salseros, and highlights of the fashions of 10 unique cultures that represent Club members and the Greater Lowell Community.



To access the full "Represent Yourself" Cultural Fashion show, pause here and visit <https://youtu.be/cS9arKUPL74>.

Equity Action Plan Pillar #2

Youth Voice: We create space for our teens, especially those from marginalized communities, to build both skills and confidence in order to amplify their voices.

We increase their access to tools to effect systemic change, and we use our organizational access to connect members with representatives, attend community rallies, and strive for change.



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GOAL: Use the Club's platforms to elevate youth voices in external communications.

STRATEGY: Identify opportunities to include youth voices directly in events, media and social media, and press coverage

ACTION STEP: The Club has publicly shared youth perspectives on community/national situations that have arisen, shared member stories with local media outlets for release, and developed a "Teen Voices" video series planned, produced, and recorded by members in the Music Clubhouse.



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In this public statement from December 2020, Club teens share their personal perspectives and experiences about immigration in Lowell.

To hear the statement, visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gac0a4xExRo>



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Teen Voices is a member-run video series which Club teens star in, record, and produce. This series is intended for Club members to share their perspectives on major themes such as values, goals, and inspirations. To access the full Teen Voices series, go to:

**[https://youtube.com/playlist?
list=PLjlgqYhUe6mjhwwTrCb9bwPTT2KvctZVv](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLjlgqYhUe6mjhwwTrCb9bwPTT2KvctZVv)**



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GOAL: Use the Club's platforms to position and recongnize youth as experts in identifying and offering solutions to issues that most directly affect them.

STRATEGY: Increase the number of teens who have the opportunity to be “in the room where it happens” by serving on committees, task forces or events - both internally at the Club and externally in community and advocacy work.

ACTION STEP: Over the past several months, Club teens were involved with the Mayor's Youth Commission Committee meetings, were involved with a Social Justice training program, attended the Youth for Unity Conference, and hosted podcasts with the headmasters of Greater Lowell Technical High School and Lowell High School.



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"One takeaway is that it takes time and effort to make a solution for a problem that is affecting all of us."

- John Long (16)



I wanted to get involved in this because I wanted to hear more from different perspectives. Social justice is important because people need to educate themselves more in order to make a change. I wanted to communicate with other people who thought social justice is important. I've gotten more knowledge learning from different perspectives that taught me that in order to educate ourselves we need to communicate more."

- Sorida (17)



"I got involved because it is nice to learn new things and to understand some topics even more. What I got out of this is that there are problems that some people don't know or really talk about. My one takeaway is that their people are scared to speak out about some topics."

- Seranica (18)

Club teens share their reasons for getting involved with these initiatives and key takeaways from participating.

Equity Action Plan Pillar #3

Brave Space: We create an environment of inclusion, acceptance, kindness for our members, volunteers, staff and stakeholders. We ensure a space that has no room for racism or discrimination of any kind.



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GOAL: Establish learning and development plans that build individual and collective understanding of key inclusion and equity issues.

STRATEGY: Establish on-boarding and annual staff training plans

ACTION STEP: Onboarding requirements for all staff members have been updated to include required trainings related to DEI. Additionally, a Pledge to Our Youth was developed that outlines our commitment to young people in Lowell. This pledge was signed by all current staff members when it was first introduced, and is signed by all new staff members as part of their onboarding requirements.



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To access a copy of the Pledge to Our Youth, visit:

<https://lbgc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Pledge-to-Our-Youth-2.pdf>



Brave Space: We create an environment of inclusion, acceptance, kindness for our members, volunteers, staff and stakeholders.

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GOAL: Center youth and staff lived experiences in ongoing equity planning and policy work

STRATEGY: Conduct an annual survey of stakeholder groups: staff, youth, board, volunteer, and caregivers. Use this feedback to assess, improve, and enhance the annual equity workplan.

ACTION STEP: An all-staff DEI survey was conducted to gather feedback evaluate our Club's current performance in a variety of areas related to DEI, identify priority areas for our staff teams to focus on, and inform the organization's Equity Plan moving forward.

To access a copy of the Club's staff DEI survey survey, go to:

<https://lbgc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/BGCGL-DEI-Survey-Draft.pdf>



Brave Space: We create an environment of inclusion, acceptance, kindness for our members, volunteers, staff and stakeholders.

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GOAL: Establish organizational policies and procedures that intentionally counter institutional discrimination, and instead promote inclusivity, diversity, and safe, brave space for all.

STRATEGY: Establish an internal Equity Team that sets the equity agenda for the organization and holds the team accountable to both goals and behaviors

ACTION STEP: A staff DEI committee was created with representatives from all levels of the organization. Participants volunteers to join the committee, and met biweekly to discuss any relevant news, Club happenings, and to discuss ways to continue the effort to increase the Club's impact.



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Below are the mission and vision statements for the BGCGL Staff DEI Committee:

Mission:

"To advocate for and ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion within our community."

Vision:

"A just and equitable community."

Equity Action Plan Pillar #4

Communications: We seek out and share resources for dialogue on race, supporting trauma-informed mental health, and positive allyship.

We use our platforms to amplify the voices of marginalized community members.



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GOAL: Use the Club's platform and reach to increase visibility of BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ assets, resources, and expertise, as well as those of other marginalized communities.

STRATEGY: Create and execute a plan for regular, consistent and on-going sharing of resources and statements using our platforms - including social media, newsletters, and Board communications

ACTION STEP: A social media content calendar has been updated to allow for regular sharing of relevant resources, resources are regularly shared in all Board Communications, including the weekly Board Bulletin, and a policy was created to allow for timely and honest reactions or statements from the Club in response to local, national, and international events.



Communications: We seek out and share resources for dialogue on race, supporting trauma-informed mental health, and positive allyship.

We use our platforms to amplify the voices of marginalized community members.

To access the first Sample post of sharing resources across the Club's key social media accounts, visit:

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=6878039542237081&id=149697895071313

To access the second Sample post of sharing resources across the Club's key social media accounts, visit:

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=6017759701598407&id=149697895071313



Communications: We seek out and share resources for dialogue on race, supporting trauma-informed mental health, and positive allyship.

We use our platforms to amplify the voices of marginalized community members.

Sample Club statement shared across all social media platforms:

The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell is asking you to take action. We know that most people are horrified by the violence like the recent murders of Asians in Atlanta and the 3,800 hate crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the last year. It is up to use to make change. Please report it when you see someone discriminated against. If it's safe and appropriate, interrupt the racist joke or inform a fiend who is unintentionally using a phrase that has an offensive origin. Make it normal to have conversations about race and how we do better. We can't just say this is a different part of the country. Leaders in Lowell are reporting that it happens in our workplaces and schools. Please help ensure that our youth grow up in a safe community where someone's race or ethnicity doesn't create an obstacle to reaching their full potential.

Excerpt of a learning opportunity shared with all Board Members and Trustees in e-newsletter:

DEI Learning Opportunity through BGCA - BGCA will be hosting a panel session centered around Steve Pemberton's A Change in the World. This is sure to be "a poignant, emotionally uplifting, and rewarding conversation with Best Selling Author, Philanthropist, Acclaimed Speaker, and Senior Level Executive for the likes of Monster.com, Walgreens, Boots Alliance, am Workhuman.



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GOAL: Portray members and families in respectful, empowering, and strengths-based stories and imagery.

STRATEGY 1: Co-create with youth a guide for ethical storytelling and communications

STRATEGY 2: Formalize a style guide that includes equitable language as well as storytelling guidance

ACTION STEP: Ethical Story-telling Guidelines were created to ensure the prioritization of Strengths-Based language over Need-Based language and to better understand appropriate and inappropriate words and phrases related to race & ethnicity, diversity, equity, & inclusion, and socioeconomic context.

To access the full Ethical Story-telling Guidelines document, please visit <https://lbgc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/BGCGL-Ethical-Storytelling-Guidelines.docx.pdf>

Equity Action Plan Pillar #5

Human Resources: We examine our hiring practices, professional development, compensation, and promotion practices to minimize opportunities for bias to affect outcomes.

We recruit team members who are representative of our community at all levels of the organization.

We conduct more outreach to communities of color and make job opportunities more accessible to all.

We ensure that our team has the proper cultural competency and anti-racism training.



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GOAL: Ensure that recruitment, hiring and retention policies reflect best practices for inclusive staffing at all levels of the organization.

STRATEGY: Implement best practices such as: - Uniform job posting template - Inclusion of compensation range - Resumes reviewed without applicant name -Sharing clear paths to promotion including necessary skills and experience needed to move up.

ACTION STEP: A new job posting template was created and shared with all hiring managers and directors to ensure consistent information and messaging is shared in all postings. Additionally, compensation rates have been added to the job posting templates and updated to reflect Club's new minimum range. All job openings are now posted internally for a period of time before being shared externally.

To access the Club's job posting template, please go to

<https://lbgc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Job-Description-template-2022.pdf>



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GOAL: Establish ongoing demographic/self-identifying data collection processes, for internal benchmarking and external reporting when required

STRATEGY: Collect demographics as part of staff onboarding process and conduct survey with all current staff

ACTION STEP: Key demographics were included in the Club's DEI Survey that was completed by 85% of current Club staff at time of evaluation. Additionally, demographic questions were added to the Club's HRIS.

Equity Action Plan Pillar # 6

Volunteers: We expand and ensure the diversity of volunteers on our boards, our committees, in program areas, and on our parent council.

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GOAL: Ensure that BIPOC/LBGTQIA folks have equal rights, power and influence in the governance of our organization

STRATEGY: Empower the DEI Committee of the Board to use best practices, data and feedback to create DEI goals that the entire board will need to work to integrate into board functions and culture.

ACTION STEP: In 2021, the Board DEI committee conducted a survey and utilized the results to create two primary goals for the year. These included: Board Education and increased diversification of our overall board, in Board leadership and on committees. As part of these goals, the Board participated in an introductory DEI training with Leslie Wong, Dean of Multicultural Affairs at UMass Lowell, and DEI activities and group conversations surrounding DEI have been included in the majority of Director meetings following this training. Additionally, intentional steps have been taken to ensure that there are more diverse voices in Board leadership roles, leading to 43% of leadership positions being held by people of color compared to 14% in the previous year.



Volunteers: We expand and ensure the diversity of volunteers on our boards, our committees, in program areas, and on our parent council. We prioritize volunteers who have similar backgrounds and experiences to the youth who we serve and refine our outreach practices to reach them.

Slide information pulled from Board of Director's meeting presentation during which Guest Speaker, Leslie Wong, completed introductory DEI training with all directors.

- Assistant Dean of Student Affairs for Equity & Inclusion at UML
- Born and raised in Hawaii
- Core Work & Interests: Leadership, identity development, organizational change and development, Asian Pacific American and Indigenous issues, advocacy, equity & access concerns, cultural competency, and allyship.
- She previously worked at UColorado Boulder where she became very familiar with issues related to race, privilege, and oppression and the interactions between social identities. Her work focused on student development issues, academic success, and personal empowerment to name a few areas.



Volunteers: We expand and ensure the diversity of volunteers on our boards, our committees, in program areas, and on our parent council. We prioritize volunteers who have similar backgrounds and experiences to the youth who we serve and refine our outreach practices to reach them.

Slide excerpt pulled from a DEI learning activity which all directors participated in during the February 2022 Board of Director's meeting.

5 Behaviors in the Diversity Awareness Spectrum:

Naïve: They do not even realize they exhibit biased behavior. Often, when they offend others, they are not aware that their behavior is offensive. They frequently accept stereotypical statements as facts.

Perpetuator: They are aware of their biases and prejudices and are aware that behavior offends others. Nevertheless, they continue with derogatory jokes, comments, and actions and act as though laws or company guidelines do not apply to them.

Avoider: They are aware of biases in themselves and others. They are working on their own prejudices, but they are reluctant to address inappropriate behavior by others. They try to play it safe by saying nothing, and this behavior is often perceived as acceptance. They are sometimes referred to as "silent supporters."

Change Agent: They are not only aware of biases in themselves and others, but they also realize the negative impacts of acting on those biases. They are willing to take action when they encounter inappropriate words or behaviors. Change agents try to make a difference when there is clear evidence of discrimination or bias.

Fighter: They are constantly aware of any behavior that seems to be biased or prejudiced, and they confront offenders strongly. They have played an important role in helping minorities to move ahead, but they pay a price. For example, they may have a reputation for "fighting," and after a while people may begin to discount what they are saying and even avoid them.



Volunteers: We expand and ensure the diversity of volunteers on our boards, our committees, in program areas, and on our parent council. We prioritize volunteers who have similar backgrounds and experiences to the youth who we serve and refine our outreach practices to reach them.

GOAL: Create education, systems or tools to reinforce the positives and improve on the places where we can do better.

STRATEGY: Update Board Member recruitment to include fair representation of key demographic groups

ACTION STEP: As part of the Board of Director's overall 2022 goals, each committees that Board Members serve on has been charged with increasing diversity amongst the individuals who sit on the committees.



Volunteers: We expand and ensure the diversity of volunteers on our boards, our committees, in program areas, and on our parent council. We prioritize volunteers who have similar backgrounds and experiences to the youth who we serve and refine our outreach practices to reach them.

GOAL: Better engage and motivate diverse volunteers

STRATEGY: Conduct deliberate outreach to companies and organizations who represent similar backgrounds and experiences to the young people the Club serves

ACTION STEP: In 2021, research was conducted to determine organizations the Club would work to connect with our members as volunteers, specifically organizations that better represent our membership. As a result of this effort, numerous new and revived partnerships were formed to introduce Club members to a wide range of activities and learning experiences. Such organizations include; Black in Government (BIG), Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association of Greater Lowell, Inc. (CMAA), Lowell Community Health Center - Teen Block, Black Student Union (BSU), The Joy Tong Women in Business and the National Society of Black Engineers.

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In the above images, Club volunteer Tim from Teen BLOCK facilitates a discussion for Club members around self-expression, and ends the discussion with a dance lesson.

Equity Action Plan Pillar # 7

Social Connections: We intentionally connect people of color / marginalized identities to power structures where we have influence (including fundraising events, committees, and task forces) to support power-building across the community.



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GOAL: Connect Club members, alumni, and staff of marginalized identities to the community

STRATEGY 1: Track, prioritize, and refer opportunities to attend events or represent the Club externally

STRATEGY 2: Identify and facilitate opportunities for staff and young alumni to build relationships with the Board of Directors and other community leaders

ACTION STEP: Staff members were invited to attend community events that would normally be attended by the Senior Leadership Team, and as more events are added to the schedule in the community, we will continue to hold tickets for staff outside of senior leadership. Additionally, we have changed our policy around our own events to make space for staff to attend (i.e. one table at Youth of the Year was reserved for staff). Finally, a table at the 2021 Holiday Auction was reserved for community members that sponsored by someone else and donated back to the Club), and people of color were invited to sit at this table.

Equity Action Plan Pillar # 8

Fundraising: We ensure that fundraising practices are fair and equitable, and we recognize our donors, staff, volunteers, and families as partners in our vision to end generational poverty.



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GOAL: Ensure that policies and practices around donor relations leave no room for discrimination, harassment, or bias on the part of donors or staff

STRATEGY: Establish a gift acceptance policy that affirms our ability to refuse a gift that is based on discriminatory practices or behaviors, or a gift from a source that acts against our organizational values

ACTION STEP: In 2021, the Gift Acceptance Policy was updated to include new and revised strategies and practices.



Fundraising: We ensure that fundraising practices are fair and equitable, and we recognize our donors, staff, volunteers, and families as partners in our vision to end generational poverty.

Sample Gift Policy Update:

"The organization, upon the advice of the Gift Review Committee, reserves the right to decline any gift that does not further the mission or goals of the organization, or from a donor who does not display values consistent with those of the Club. Additionally, any gifts that would create an administrative burden or cause the organization to incur excessive expenses may be declined."

To access the full Gift Acceptance Policy, visit:

<https://lbgc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/BGCGL-Gift-Acceptance-Policy-2.pdf>



Fundraising: We ensure that fundraising practices are fair and equitable, and we recognize our donors, staff, volunteers, and families as partners in our vision to end generational poverty.

GOAL: Modify "traditional" fundraising practices to improve equity and strengths-based storytelling

STRATEGY 1: Establish guidelines for compensation of members' storytelling and fundraising event participation

STRATEGY 2: Create equitable donor recognition policies that are not based on wealth or contribution levels

ACTION STEP: Formal Ethical Story-Telling Guidelines were established, with a specific compensation policy included to ensure that members, staff, parents, and volunteers are compensated for sharing their personal stories and experiences in Club communications, at sponsored events, etc. Since this time, all Club members who've been interviewed for fundraising videos, or who have spoken at a Club fundraising event have been compensated. Additionally, since 2018, Donor Recognition in annual impact reports has consistently been updated to focus on collective community impact rather than specific supporters.



Fundraising: We ensure that fundraising practices are fair and equitable, and we recognize our donors, staff, volunteers, and families as partners in our vision to end generational poverty.

Below is an excerpt pulled from the introductory paragraph of the Compensation for Storytelling section of the Ethical Story-telling Guidelines:

Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell Guidelines for Ethical Communications Compensation for Storytelling At the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell, we rely on our members, staff, parents and volunteers sharing their experiences with the Club in order to tell the story of the Boys & Girls Club. We think it is only fair that we compensate those individuals who take the time to share their personal experiences in order to help the Club engage supporters and raise the revenue needed for Club operations. This plan provides an outline of the ways in which individuals may be asked to share their story, and the associated compensation. It is not necessarily meant to be an exhaustive list, so please check with the Director of Development or Executive Director if you are unsure whether someone's story will be compensated.



Fundraising: We ensure that fundraising practices are fair and equitable, and we recognize our donors, staff, volunteers, and families as partners in our vision to end generational poverty.

The following outlines ways that Donor Recognition in the annual impact report has been updated annually since 2018:

2018 Impact Report: Only listed donors who made cumulative gifts of \$250 or more.

To access the 2018 Impact Report, visit:

<https://lbgc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/2018-Impact-Report-BGCGL.pdf>

2019 Impact Report: Removed donors by gift level and instead listed anyone who made a monetary contribution at any level.

To access the 2019 Impact Report, visit:

<https://lbgc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/BGCGL-2019-Impact-Report.pdf>

2020 Impact Report: Changed the focus from individuals to the collective impact of how many people gave through volunteering, in-kind and monetary donations.

To access the 2020 Impact Report, visit:

<https://lbgc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Impact-Report-2020.pdf>



Fundraising: We ensure that fundraising practices are fair and equitable, and we recognize our donors, staff, volunteers, and families as partners in our vision to end generational poverty.

GOAL: Increase the diversity of our donor base to better reflect Club membership

STRATEGY: Expand our fundraising methods and asks to align with a wider range of donor needs and goals

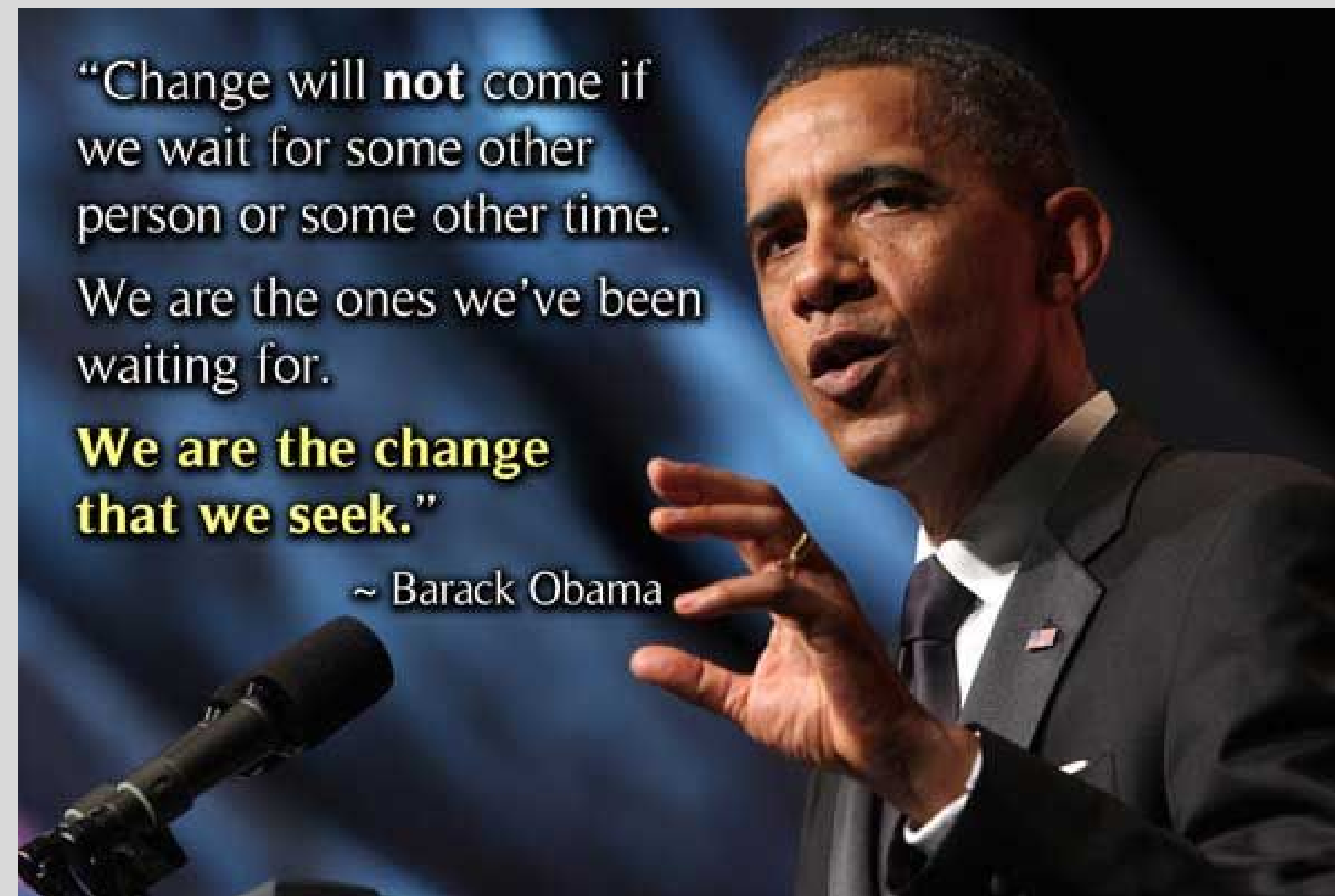
ACTION STEP: In 2021, new, custom and small-business sponsorship opportunities were added to the Club's Annual Holiday Auction sponsorship packages. This practice will continue for future Club events, and additional fundraising methods will be explored in 2022. Additionally, Venmo was added as a payment option for all Club events and for making donations.



Fundraising: We ensure that fundraising practices are fair and equitable, and we recognize our donors, staff, volunteers, and families as partners in our vision to end generational poverty.

To access the custom sponsorship form outlining opportunities to sponsor the 2021 Holiday Auction, go to:

<https://lbgc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Custom-Sponsor-Form.pdf>



"Change will NOT come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."
- Barack Obama